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SUBJECT: Zagreb Daily Report - December 23, 2009

11. (U) Latest Polling Confirms Lead for Josipovic; Bandic and Vidosevic Battle for Second Slot:  
On December 22 the polling firm PULS released its last poll before the first round vote on Sunday December 27, which confirmed that Ivo Josipovic of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) is the strong favorite for a spot in the second round runoff election. In the poll, Josipovic received 31 percent support of domestic voters, while ex-SDP member and current Mayor of Zagreb, Milan Bandic, received 17.4 percent. In third place was ex-member of the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) and current head of the Croatian Chamber of Commerce, Nadan Vidosevic, with 11.9% support, while Andrija Hebrang, candidate of the HDZ, was in fourth place with 9.3 percent.  
The poll was conducted in mid-December and utilized 1200 respondents, but is reflective only of voters in Croatia-proper. The same day the poll was released Croatian public TV held the last presidential debate prior to the vote, but with twelve participants and only two hours most candidates only had time to rehash their main campaign themes. However, Bandic-who campaigned heavily in recent weeks throughout Bosnia-mentioned that if the Butmir negotiations did not produce a solution that improved the situation of Croats residing in Bosnia then Bosnian-Croat politicians should float a proposal for a third entity. The electoral law forbids campaigning the day before the vote so all campaign activity will cease after midnight on Christmas Day. However, because of the proximity of the vote to the Christmas holidays most campaign events will wind up on the afternoon of Christmas Eve. Election law further stipulates that the first reporting of the election results-preliminary results or exit poll forecasts-must wait until after midnight on the day of voting.

WALKER